

Workplace Violence and Crime

In 1998, there were 709 homicides in the workplace, down from 860 in 1997. Of this number, 521 victims (73%) were wage and salary workers and 188 (27%) were self-employed. (Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). 2000. *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 1999*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 306.)

In 80% of workplace homicides in 1998, a firearm was used to kill the victim. The remaining murder victims were either stabbed (9%), beaten (7), or killed with another type of weapon (4%). (Ibid.)

Over half of all victims killed in the workplace were between twenty-five and forty-four years of age; 19%, between forty-five and fifty-four; 12%, between fifty-five and sixty-four; 9%, twenty-four years and younger; and 7%, sixty-five and older. (Ibid.)

In 1998, 80% of workplace homicide victims died during robberies of their workplace; 14% were killed by work associates (9% by current or former co-workers and 5% by clients); and the remaining 6% were killed by personal acquaintances (2% by husbands or ex-husbands, 1% by boyfriends or ex-boyfriends, and 4% by other family members). (Ibid.)

Seventy-seven percent of workplace violence victims in 1998 were male and 23% were female. Sixty-six percent of these victims were white; 18% were black; 14% were Hispanic (*); 10% were Asian or Pacific Islander; 1% were American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut; and the remaining 5% were of other or unspecified races. (*Persons identified as Hispanic may be of other races; therefore, total will exceed 100%). (Ibid.)

Of selected occupations examined from 1992 to 1996, law enforcement officers were the most vulnerable to be victims of workplace violence. Other occupations with high rates of victimization included private security guards, taxi drivers, prison and jail guards, and bartenders. (Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). July 1999. *Criminal Victimization 1998: Changes 1997-98 with Trends 1993-98*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.)

Homicide is the second leading cause of fatal occupational injury in the nation. Nearly 1,000 workers are murdered and 1.5 million assaulted in the workplace each year. The 709 workplace homicides in 1998 accounted for 12% of the total 6,026 fatal work injuries that year. (Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). 1999. *National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 1998*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor.)

Currently, one out of every six violent crimes experienced by U.S. residents ages twelve or older occurs in the workplace, including 20.5% of all reported assaults, 10.8% of all reported rapes, and 6.5% of all reported robberies. (Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). July 1998. "Workplace Violence, 1992-96: National Crime Victimization Survey." *Special Report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.)

Workplace violence costs American business approximately \$4.2 billion a year, conservatively estimating that each significant episode runs upwards of \$250,000 in lost work time, employee medical benefits, and legal expenses. (Albrecht, S. 1997. *Fear and Violence on the Job: Prevention Solutions for the Dangerous Workplace*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.)

Note: OVC makes no representation concerning the accuracy of data from non-Department of Justice sources.

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